

Executive Summary
Fiscal Year 2016
Metro North Annual Plan

The Metro North Regional Employment Board (REB) continued its focus on resource development in FY'15 with significant success—adding \$1.2M to the region for FY'15 and subsequent years. In doing so, the REB expanded its current programming and existing partnerships and made progress in meeting the goals established in its FY'13-FY'16 Strategic Plan for its priority industries and occupations, as noted below. For FY'16, the final year of the current Strategic Plan, the REB intends to continue to respond to new opportunities, while addressing continuing challenges.

The REB will also be working on some new and exciting initiatives in the coming year. In addition to implementing newly funded programs, the REB will: 1) transition from the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014; 2) continue to build its industry partnerships as well as solidify the work of the new Adult Basic Education College and Career Transitions Committee; 3) continue exploring our potential role in preparing the workforce for employment resulting from the Wynn Everett casino scheduled to be built in our region; and 4) at the REB, continue to streamline administrative and reporting work to free staff time for industry partnership and resource development work.

As it moves forward, the REB is working to identify creative new approaches, consider diverse sources of funding, and streamline existing systems to optimize efficiency. In addition, continuous improvement and innovation in program implementation will allow the REB to adjust its approaches in workforce development to align with the ever-changing economy and maximize the resources available to serve the 20-community Metro North region. In FY'13, the REB formulated a strategic plan that focused on the following priorities:

- ◆ Priority 1: Infrastructure and Systems Development (Development)
- ◆ Priority 2: Alignment of Workforce and Business Needs (Implementation)
- ◆ Priority 3: Accountability and Visibility (Reporting)

Priorities 1 and 2 are closely tied to infrastructure, both internally and externally, including processes, systems and documentation. The first two priorities also encompass capacity-building and relationship-building to supply and direct the work. Priority 3 focuses on performance excellence and on implementing modern and novel methods for connecting to businesses and other audiences through technology and other media in ways that will be valuable to them. The last priority also boosts regional accountability and knowledge and information-sharing to advance the REB's efforts overall.

Based on prominence in the region and current growth opportunities, the Metro North REB plans to target the following industries/occupations: 1) Advanced Manufacturing; 2) Healthcare; 3) Information Technology; 4) Life Sciences, and 5) STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) occupations, which cut across industries. During FY'16, the REB will also continue to engage in cross-regional initiatives to extend its reach and enhance its resources.

WIOA Transition. On July 1, 2015, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) takes effect, superseding the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). WIOA is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in more than 15 years. The final implementation regulations will not be released until January 2016, but the REB and Metro North career centers are in the process of transitioning to the new law.

Advanced Manufacturing. In June 2012, the REB took the initial steps that led to the development of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC), a collaboration now jointly led by the Metro North REB, and the Merrimack Valley, Greater Lowell, and North Shore Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). The membership of the consortium, which is designed to support and advance the manufacturing industry in the northeast region of Massachusetts, currently includes: representatives from the four WIBs and their seven career centers, three community colleges, about seven local vocational technical schools, and about 72 manufacturing companies. Thirteen (13) of these companies stepped up to form the NAMC Business Leadership Team, which acts as a steering committee for NAMC.

A Job-Driven NEG Career Pathways allocation to NAMC will add a net increase of eight (8) training slots in FY'16 for Metro North customers, building upon three cycles of training (72 customers across four regions) that have already been delivered in the previous two years.

In order to continue training, NAMC participated in a state-level submission under the American Apprenticeship Initiative. If funded, we would use a pre-apprenticeship training component, followed by hires and apprenticeship training at the community colleges/voc techs on evenings and weekends while the apprentices work full-time. NAMC obtained commitments from about 15 companies for 73 apprenticeships.

NAMC also participated in a State submission for a Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (NEG), which was recently funded in full. This grant will train 72 enrollees in machining and electronics, with career centers providing case management, and also allows for partnership development activities, which will support convening and oversight activities provided by the four NAMC Workforce Development Boards as well as providing additional funding to support the NAMC Manufacturing Market Managers, who visit manufacturers to identify their needs and then link them with available resources.

The Metro North REB also received a third \$10k grant from MassDevelopment as part of their AMP It Up! Campaign, an initiative aimed at dispelling widespread misperceptions about the nature of today's manufacturing industry by educating youth about the wide range and abundance of advanced manufacturing jobs available throughout Massachusetts. The REB will work closely with local alternative high schools, guidance counselors, and career counselors to introduce youth and their families to the opportunities presented by careers in advanced manufacturing.

Life Sciences. The REB is a partner in the SCILS (Skilled Careers in Life Sciences) Initiative, which involves four regions (Boston, Metro North, Metro South/West and South Shore) and is led by the City of Boston. Made possible by a four-year \$5M H1B Technical Skills training grant from the US Department of Labor beginning in FY'13, SCILS is delivering life sciences training to 360 participants through programs at Boston University and Quincy College, help fund 300

internships through the Mass Life Sciences Center, and develop the capacity of the region's one-stop career centers to better connect customers with the life sciences sector. The REB is participating in the SCILS Advisory Council, which is an opportunity to advance initiatives in workforce development and build new connections in the life sciences industry. The SCILS Advisory Council is an active group that appears poised to form a sustainable consortium of business, college, voc tech, career center and other partners focused on the life sciences. REB staff are currently working jointly with the SCILS Project Manager to develop a career pathways tool focused on the life sciences. In FY'16, there are plans for an employer roundtable, with a focus on discovering the way employers would like to learn about the potential job candidates coming out SCILS-funded training programs.

Healthcare. In concert with the implementation of the Healthcare Skills Gap Grant, the Metro North Healthcare Skills Gap Partnership was formed over five years ago; the grant supported curriculum development and skills training in collaboration with Middlesex Community College and several area hospitals. The Healthcare Partnership also oversaw the development of a career pathways chart for use in mapping steps to healthcare careers for students and job seekers/career changers. The partnership meets quarterly, and will be working on updating and expanding its career pathways work.

In FY'14, a subset of the partnership developed a proposal for a Healthcare Workforce Transformation Planning Grant, which resulted in an award of \$32.5k. With these funds, the partners have conducted surveys, focus groups, and interviews with staff of the Cambridge Health Alliance and Hallmark Health System.

In FY'15, the partnership developed a proposal for a Healthcare Workforce Transformation Training Grant, which resulted in an award of \$178.5k. The partners in this project are Cambridge Health Alliance, Hallmark Health System, Inc., Mount Auburn Hospital, Middlesex Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, Medical-Legal Partnership | Boston, Just-A-Start Corporation, Career Source, and The Career Place. Training will be developed that includes information about the Patient-Centered Medical Home model, team-based modes of delivering healthcare services, the roles of different team members, the practices they use to coordinate and communicate about care, and detailed information on the social determinants of health. The training will be delivered to incumbent workers and community college students and other trainees.

STEM. The REB recently sponsored its fifth regional STEM forum, held at the Microsoft New England Research and Development (NERD) Center, as part of the Cambridge Science Festival. The event brought together about 135 parents and their children, as well as representatives from business, schools, training providers, community colleges, and career centers. Attendees listened to speakers as well as talking directly with professionals from: Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Biogen, CDM Smith, Boston Centerless, and Vecna to learn about their jobs. The first forum spawned the creation of the Metro North STEM Partnership, which directed the development of a comprehensive, web-based Metro North STEM Resource Inventory, currently available on the REB's website: www.mnreb.org.

In September 2013, the REB was awarded an @Scale grant by the Governor's STEM council. In December 2014, the REB was recommended for continuation funds under this @Scale Project

Initiative in order to expand programming and develop Future City teams in 13 middle schools in Working Cities across Massachusetts. The Future City competition is national in scope, and exposes middle school youth to careers in engineering by having them build scale models of cities focused on specific themes, e.g., transportation, urban agriculture. As a result of this work, at the November 2013 STEM Summit, Governor Deval Patrick announced that the Metro North REB had been designated as the lead for the eighth Regional STEM Network, now called the Metro North STEM Network. The designation is accompanied by an annual grant of \$40k to support network activities. In FY'16, the REB will be continue developing network membership and working on strategic planning for the network, which will involve pre-K through post-secondary educational institutions, including community colleges, voc techs, and four-year institutions, business, career centers, and other education and training providers. The general goal of the network is to expose youth and adults to careers in STEM and to the educational pathways that lead to these careers.

Information Technology. In FY'16, the Business Engagement Task Force, comprised of REB members, will conduct focus groups with businesses to better identify industry need in a couple of areas – information technology/computer science, life sciences, and medical devices. Additionally, the REB and Metro North career centers are partnering in a National Science Foundation “STEM-C” grant submitted by BATEC, in partnership with Jobs for the Future (JFF) and Bunker Hill Community College, which, if funded, will focus on working with Charlestown, Somerville, and Chelsea High Schools to integrate an early college IT/Computer Science pathway.

Initiatives re: Persons with Disabilities. In FY 2014, the Metro North REB became an Employment Network, on behalf of our two career centers. Ticket to Work services are provided at each career center and entail providing core and intensive services, including job placement services for people with disabilities.

Also in FY'16, the Metro North REB is the local lead for a project funded through a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant awarded to the State. The REB will be working in collaboration with its career centers and Triangle, Inc. (Malden) to provide training in healthcare and culinary arts and job placement services to people with disabilities. The project, with training implemented through Bunker Hill Community College as well as several nursing assistant program in the Metro North region, is funded by the US Department of Labor for three and a half years. The career centers will work with adult enrollees, while Triangle will serve young adults.

Youth Services. In addition to our 10 WIOA Youth programs (described below) and our previously described STEM activities, Metro North will again fund YouthWorks summer employment projects for 400 to 600 youth in six cities in the region: Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Revere, and Somerville. The REB will also fund School to Career Connecting Activities (a program to connect in-school youth with part-time internships/employment) in five communities: Everett, Malden, Revere, Somerville, and Woburn.

WIOA Title I Funding. Massachusetts received increases in WIOA allocations for FY'16. The following charts compare funding over the last three years for Metro North.

	New Funding				
	FY'14	FY'15	FY'16	Diff FY'16 Less FY'15	Diff FY'16 Less FY'14
WIA Adults	940,595	1,001,397	1,138,533	137,136	197,938
WIA Dislocated Workers	924,250	1,083,062	1,141,728	58,666	217,478
WIA Youth	974,319	1,012,695	1,120,487	107,792	146,168
Subtotal	2,839,164	3,097,154	3,400,748	303,594	561,584
Employment Services	1,177,968	1,192,256	1,232,327	40,071	54,359
One-Stop Line Item	736,312	625,865	486,234	(139,631)	(250,078)
Total	4,753,444	4,915,275	5,119,309	204,034	365,865

	New and Carry-in Total Funding				
	FY'14	FY'15	FY'16	Diff FY'16 Less FY'15	Diff FY'16 Less FY'14
WIA Adults	1,054,266	1,044,057	1,166,433	122,376	112,167
WIA Dislocated Workers	983,297	1,100,809	1,155,328	54,519	172,031
WIA Youth	1,046,806	1,088,286	1,130,727	42,441	83,921
Subtotal	3,084,369	3,233,152	3,452,488	219,336	368,119
Employment Services	1,425,401	1,397,256	1,372,327	(24,929)	(53,074)
One-Stop Line Item	736,312	625,865	486,234	(139,631)	(250,078)
Total	5,246,082	5,256,273	5,311,049	54,776	64,967

Considering only new funding, Metro North WIA funding shows a gain of 304k over FY'15, but when compared to FY'14, the FY'16 allocation is a \$562k increase from FY'14 levels. Employment Services (Wagner-Peyser labor exchange funding) shows a gain of \$40k, and is \$54k increase from FY'14 levels. The One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) line item shows a continuing decline as a result of a State decision to no longer observe a \$2.75M earmark for the original three "competitive model" regions, but to gradually reduce funds by using an 85% hold harmless for these regions, until equivalence with formula allocations is achieved. Metro North's OSCC line item allocation is reduced in FY'16 to arrive at a final annual allocation about

\$500k less than was received every year from FY 1998 to FY 2012. When summed together, the total of new allocations for FY'16 is trending in a positive direction (+\$204k), and is an increase over FY'14 levels by approximately \$366k.

The second chart above shows the total funding available in FY'16 for our core grants with new and carry-in funds included. It indicates that the new funding in FY'16 resulted in a net increase of about \$55k overall, and an increase of \$65k compared to FY'14 funding levels. Compared to FY'15, funding increased for WIOA Adults (+13.7%, to \$1.14M), WIOA Dislocated Workers (+5.4%, to \$1.14), and WIOA Youth (+10.6%, to \$1.12M). WIA/WIOA carry-in funds from FY'15 to FY'16 will be \$56k less than FY'15, so that the overall total available is \$247k more than FY'15. The lower carry-in funds are the result of being underfunded across grants over the last couple of fiscal years, thus requiring the career centers to fully spend their allocations during the fiscal year.

In spring 2015, Metro North procured youth training providers for a two-year funding cycle starting in FY'16. WIOA requires the youth formula program to spend at least 75% of funds on out-of-school youth, compared to 30% under WIA. WIOA also places a new priority on work-based learning by providing that at least 20% of local youth formula funds be used for work experience. The region will fund five in-school providers totaling \$181,326 and five out-of-school providers totaling \$414,358. There is an additional \$15k set aside for Youth Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) with Adult funds likely available if there is greater demand. Metro North will serve about 54 in-school youth and about 83 out-of-school youth through its WIOA Youth programs.

The career centers will receive a total of about 32.3% of youth funds, with 28.6% designated for the provision of framework services. In addition, they will be expected to provide youth training fairs/information sessions focused on our priority industries such as STEM, advanced manufacturing and healthcare. Approximately, 3.7% of WIOA Youth funds are allocated to support Youth Transition Services offered by The Career Place, where outreach to youth in the community is performed in order to connect them with WIOA programs and transition services to assist with further training/education or entering the job market.

Metro North has allocated 37.8% of WIOA Adult funds for ITA training slots, with an additional 1.8% set aside for skills development at the career centers, for a total of 39.6% to training. Metro North expects to enroll approximately 88 new customers in WIOA Adult training during the coming year, with additional new customers 200 receiving intensive services and direct placement assistance, for a total of 288 new customers served, in addition to 27 customers carried over from FY'15.

WIOA Dislocated Worker funds have been allocated at 27.3% (30% of new program funds) to training providers (about 63 slots). With an additional 9.4% proposed for skills development (about 109 slots), a total of 36.7% is allocated for overall training activities, again with additional new customers (104) receiving intensive services and direct placement assistance. A total of 276 new and 169 customers continuing from FY'15 will be served, 445 altogether.

In FY'13, Metro North was awarded a \$223k Rapid Response Set-Aside grant to serve workers laid off from four companies (Macy's, Belmont; Inn at Harvard, Cambridge; Bank of America,

Malden; Millipore, Burlington); this grant acted as a bridge to an “MN4” National Emergency Grant for these companies from USDOL. The funding for the NEG was for \$602k (including the Rapid Response amount). In FY’15, two additional companies – CSM Bakery and Market Forge - were added to the MN4 NEG. Metro North career centers will continue to work with eligible customers through December 31, 2015. In FY’15, the REB was granted approval to utilize \$120k of the Rapid Response Set-Aside grant to support case management of 60 dislocated workers impacted by the closure of the Kraft Foods Group plant in Woburn. The Metro North career centers will continue to provide services to the impacted workers through June 2016.

The REB also participated in a statewide application for a Job-Driven (JD) NEG, which is focused on serving the long-term unemployed through the development of career pathways training. In FY’16, as mentioned earlier, this NEG will add eight training slots to the NAMC Advanced Manufacturing Training Program. Additionally, through the JD NEG, both Metro North career centers are actively placing dislocated workers in on-the-job trainings (OJTs) at employers throughout the region and, for each OJT, are awarded an additional ITA.

Other Funds. Massachusetts was awarded a new Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant, which expands upon the Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA) grant. Metro North was allocated \$306k for the period of 7/1/15 to 12/31/15, an addition of \$103k over FY’15. It is likely that the region will see an additional amount, possibly of a similar scale, starting in January 2016.

The REB is developing a hospitality training program proposal to be submitted to the Starwood Foundation. If funded, the program would provide training in the hospitality sector to immigrant customers.

The region has also been awarded \$401k in Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) funds, to support ABE programs focused on career pathways.

Overall Service Levels. Given the improving economy, the region anticipates slightly lower service levels for the coming year compared to last year. Customer volume for FY’15 (about 20,015) is estimated to be about 1,300 lower than the previous year’s service level (21,399). Metro North career centers (The Career Place in Woburn, and Career Source, Cambridge and satellite location in Chelsea) expect to serve just over 19.5k customers in FY’16, given the expected continuing decline in total unemployed. Of the 19.5k, almost 11.6k are expected to be unemployment claimants, about 1,000 will be veterans, and more than 1,175 will be people with disabilities. About 1,000 employers are expected to use Metro North centers for a variety of employer services, including, but not limited to, outplacement services, job fairs, on-site recruitments, and posting job orders.

Overall Funding Picture. Metro North plans to continue its efforts to diversify and broaden its funding base through partnership development and resource development activities. Across multiple funding sources, about \$1.9M will be available for education and training. Funding for career centers in Metro North is a little brighter in FY’16 than in the past few years, despite continuing declines in OSCC State line item funding, given increased RESEA funding and the addition of other resources related to sector initiatives. At the same time, the region anticipates a slight decline in service volume in FY’16 compared to FY’15, but at close to 20k

customers, will still be working with a relatively high customer volume. Over the last few years, the region has worked to add and diversify funding, as various traditional funding resources have disappeared or declined; despite some bright spots in the funding picture, in order to maintain sufficient resources, the region will continue to need to find creative methods to effectively meet demand for service as well as gain additional support to advance the work defined in the Metro North REB FY 2013 – 2016 Strategic Plan.

The REB, working in concert with Metro North career centers and with other partners, including business, other Workforce Investment Boards, colleges and universities, education and training providers, public school systems, and vocational technical schools, will continue to aggressively pursue grant opportunities that will support the development of career pathways training and career opportunities in priority and other industries for our workforce. The REB will continue to foster the growth of partnerships that can maintain and develop capacity, and support new approaches to aligning workforce development with business needs; in turn, we expect these efforts to result in enriched opportunities for our youth as well as our adult workforce.

The REB is seeking public comment on the proposed FY'16 Plan as outlined in the above Executive Summary. All comments must be submitted in writing no later than July 13, 2015 to:

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